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SUBJECT: BENIN: MINISTRY OF HEALTH INAUGURATES TWO-WAY RADIO NETWORK
IN NORTHERN BENIN

¶1. On December 8, Benin's Minister of Health, Dr. Flore Gangbo, together with representatives of USAID, UNICEF, and WHO, officially launched a radio communication network to serve the Malanville-Karimama health zone, a poor region in the far northeastern corner of Benin. This two-way radio network used \$150,000 of USAID funding, in a partnership with UNICEF to install the system.

¶2. With this communication system the residents of this health zone will have access to better treatment for medical emergencies, especially obstetric cases where the life of the mother and the baby may be in danger. A birth attendant in a remote village can now call a midwife or doctor at the health zone hospital to get advice or refer a difficult case for expert care.

¶3. Two-way radio communications networks are increasingly being used in developing countries to handle difficult obstetric cases and other medical emergencies. In Benin, where maternal and infant mortality rates are high, this is a helpful tool to protect the health of the residents living in the nine districts served by the radio network. In his speech, the USAID Mission Director commended UNICEF and the Ministry of Health for this productive partnership and stressed the need for continued cooperation among donors and the government to succeed in substantially reducing maternal and neo-natal mortality.

HOLTZAPPLE